

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BOGOTA 04762 251512Z
ACTION OPIC-06

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 USIA-15 /039 W
-----252050Z 039708 /64

R 242219Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1680
INFO AMCONSUL CALI
AMCONSUL MEDELLIN
AMCONSUL BARRANQUILLA

UNCLAS BOGOTA 4762

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: EINV, CO
SUBJECT: OPIC ANDEAN INVESTMENT MISSION, VISIT TO COLOMBIA
MAY 15-18, 1977

REF: STATE 092934; STATE 097414; STATE 105505

1. OPIC ANDEAN INVESTMENT MISSION, CONSISTING OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM 15 U.S. FIRMS, COMPLETED A FOUR DAY VISIT TO COLOMBIA ON MAY 18. MISSION MEMBERS HAD OVER 100 INDIVIDUAL APPOINTMENTS IN BOGOTA AND CALI; ATTENDED AN EMBASSY BRIEFING GIVEN BY THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR, ECON COUNSELOR, AND COMMERCIAL ATTACHE; AND MET WITH 20 HIGH-LEVEL GOC OFFICIALS INCLUDING THE MINISTER OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, DIRECTOR OF INCOMEX (COLOMBIAN INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN TRADE) AND OTHER KEY OFFICIALS WHO APPROVE FOREIGN INVESTMENT OR CARRY OUT GOC INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS. ON MONDAY NIGHT, MAY 16 THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES HOSTED A RECEPTION FOR THE MISSION AND ON WEDNESDAY MORNING, MAY 18 REPRESENTATIVES OF TH U.S. BANKS OPERATING IN COLOMBIA MET WITH THE GROUP DURING A BREAKFAST BRIEFING. THE MISSION ALSO ATTENDED LUNCHEONS IN CALI AND BOGOTA HOSTED BY THE RESPECTIVE CHAPTERS OF THE COLOMBIAN-AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.
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2. USIS SUPPORT WAS EXCELLENT RESULTING IN EXTENSIVE TV, RADIO, AND PRESS COVERAGE OF THE MISSION'S VISIT.

3. DURING DEBRIEFING AT EL DORADO AIRPORT, MISSION MEMBERS EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THEIR APPOINTMENT SCHEDULES WHICH IN SEVERAL CASES, RESULTED

IN PROMISING FUTURE COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES. HOWEVER, MOST OF THESE PROSPECTIVE OPPORTUNITIES CONSISTED OF EXPORT SALES, ENGINEERING SERVICES, OR IN THE CASE OF COOK CHOCOLATE COMPANY, THE PURCHASE OF COCOA BEANS IN COLOMBIA FOR EXPORT TO THE UNITED STATES. VERY FEW ACTUAL INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES WERE MENTIONED. SOUTHLAND CAPITAL NOTED THAT THEY WERE CONSIDERING PURCHASING SEVERAL AFRICAN PALM PLANTATIONS.

4. SEVERAL POSSIBLE AGENTS OR DISTRIBUTORS FOR PRODUCTS WERE IDENTIFIED AND THE COMPANIES WHICH ALREADY HAD REPRESENTATIVES IN COLOMBIA SOLIDIFIED RELATIONSHIPS.

5. IT APPEARED THAT THE MOST SUCCESSFUL MISSION MEMBERS WERE THE ENGINEERING SERVICES COMPANIES WHICH WILL BE BIDDING ON SEVERAL LARGE PROJECTS INCLUDING A FERTILIZER PLANT, COAL HANDLING AND PROCESSING FACILITIES, AND A PULP AND PAPER MILL.

6. THE GENERAL CONSENSUS OF THE MISSION WAS THAT, ALTHOUGH A PROMISING MARKET EXISTS IN COLOMBIA, GOC BUREAUCRATIC RED TAPE AND UNCERTAINTIES OVER THE DIRECTION AND FUTURE OF THE ANDEAN PACT (ESPECIALLY INDUSTRIAL SECTORAL ASSIGNMENTS), CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT WHICH WILL REQUIRE SERIOUS STUDY BEFORE ACTUAL INVESTMENT PLANS ARE MADE.

7. OPIC ORGANIZERS AND MISSION MEMBERS COMPLIMENTED
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EMBASSY IN BOGOTA AND CONSULATE STAFF IN CALI ON THE OVERALL ORGANIZATION OF THE MISSION AND EMBASSY SUPPORT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN INVESTMENTS, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BOGOTA04762
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
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Office: ACTION OPIC
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 92934, 77 STATE 97414, 77 STATE 105505
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2397565
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: OPIC ANDEAN INVESTMENT MISSION, VISIT TO COLOMBIA MAY 15-18, 1977
TAGS: EINV, BTRA, CO, OPIC
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/efcf568b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009